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———*Pauci dignoſcere poſſunt*
Vera bona, atque illis multum diverſa.——— Juv.

IT is a common obſervation, that though happineſs is every man's aim, and though it is generally purſued by a gratification of the predominant paſſion, yet few have acuteneſs enough to diſcover the points which would effectually procure the long-ſought end. One cannot but wonder that ſuch intenſe application as moſt of us beſtow on the cultivation of our favourite deſires ſhould yet leave us ignorant of the moſt eſſential objects of our ſtudy. For my part, I was ſo early convinced of the truth of what I have aſſerted, that inſtead of ſearching for what would contribute moſt to my own happineſs, I have ſpent great part of my life in the ſtudy of what may extend the enjoyment of others. That knowledge I flatter myſelf I have diſcovered, and ſhall now diſcloſe to the world. I beg to be attended to: I beg mankind will believe

lieve that I know better than any of them what will aſcertain the felicity of their lives. I am not going to impart ſo great (though ſo often revealed) a ſecret, as that it is religion or virtue: few would believe me; fewer would try the recipe. In ſpite of the philoſophy of the age, in ſpite of the gravity of my character, and of the decency which I hope I have hitherto moſt ſanctimoniouſly obſerved, I muſt avow my perſuaſion, that the ſenſual pleaſure of LOVE is the great cordial of life, and the only ſpecific for removing the anxieties of our own paſſions, or for ſupporting the injuries and iniquities which we ſuffer from thoſe of other men.

"WELL! (ſhall I be told) and is this your admirable "diſcovery? Is this the ARCANUM that has eſcaped "the penetration of all enquires in all ages? What "other doctrine has been taught by the moſt ſenſible "philoſophers? Was not this the text of the ſermons of "EPICURUS? Was not this the theory, and practice too, "of the experienced ALCIBIADES? What other were "the tenets of the ſage lord ROCHESTER, or of the "miſſionary *Saint*-EVREMONT?"--It is very true; and a thouſand other founders of ſects, nay of religious orders, have taught--or at leaſt practiſed, the ſame doctrines. But I pretend to introduce ſuch refinements into the ſyſtem of ſenſuality, as ſhall vindicate the diſcovery to myſelf, and throw at a diſtance the minute philoſophers, who (if they were my forerunners) only ſerved to lead the world aſtray.

HEAR then in one word the myſterious precept! "*Young* women are *not* the proper object of ſenſual "love: it is the MATRON, the HOARY FAIR who can "give, communicate, inſure happineſs," I might enumerate a thouſand reaſons to inforce my doctrine, as the fickleneſs of youth, the caprices of beauty and it's tranſient ſtate, the jealouſy from rivals, the diſtraction from having children, the important avocations of dreſs, and the infinite occupations of a pretty woman, which endanger

endanger or divide her ſentiments from being always fixed on the faithful lover; and none of which combat the affections of the grateful, tender, attentive MATRON. But as one example is worth a thouſand reaſons, I ſhall recommend my plan by pointing out the extreme happineſs which has attended ſuch diſcreet heroes as are commemorated in the annals of love for having offered up their hearts at ancient ſhrines; and I ſhall clearly demonſtrate by precedents, that ſeveral ladies in the bloom of their WRINKLES have inſpired more laſting and more fervent paſſions, than the greateſt beauties who had ſcarce loſt ſight of their teens. The fair young creatures of the preſent hour will forgive a preference which is the reſult of deep meditation, great reading, and ſtrict impartiality, when they reflect, that they can ſcarce contrive to be young above a dozen years, and may be old for fifty or ſixty; and they may believe me, that after forty they will value one lover more, than they do twenty now; a ſenſation of happineſs, which they will find increaſe as they advance in years. I cannot but obſerve with pleaſure that the legiſlature itſelf ſeems to coincide with my way of thinking, and has very prudently enacted that young ladies ſhall not enter ſo early into the bonds of love, when they are incapable of reflection, and of all the ſerious duties which belong to an union of hearts. A ſentiment, which indeed our laws ſeem always to have had in view; for unleſs there was implanted in our natures a ſtrong temptation towards the love of ELDERLY women, why ſhould the very firſt prohibition in the table of conſanguinity forbid a man to marry his GRANDMOTHER?

THE firſt heroine we read of, whoſe charms were proof againſt the injuries of time, was the accompliſhed SARAH: I think the moſt moderate computations make her to be ninety when that wanton monarch ABIMELECH would have undermined her virtue. But as doubtleſs the obſervance of that virtue had been the great founda-

tion

tion of the continuance of her beauty, and as the rigidneſs of it rather exempts her from, than expoſes her as an object of my doctrine, I ſhall ſay no more of that lady.

HELEN, the beautiful HELEN, if there is any truſting to claſſic pariſh regiſters, was fourſcore when PARIS ſtole her; and though the war laſted ten years after that on her account, monſieur HOMER, who wrote their romance, does not give any hint of the gallant young prince having ſhewed the leaſt decay of paſſion or ſymptom of inconſtancy: a fidelity, which in all probability was at leaſt as much owing to the experience of the dame, and to her knowledge in the refinements of pleaſure, as to her bright eyes, unfaded complexion, or the everlaſting lilies and roſes of her cheeks.

I AM not clear that length of years, eſpecially in heroic minds, does not increaſe rather than abate the ſentimental flame. The great ELIZABETH, whoſe paſſion for the unfortunate earl of ESSEX is juſtly a favourite topic with all who delight in romantic hiſtory, was full ſixty-eight when ſhe condemned her lover to death for ſlighting her endearments. And, if I might inſtance in our own ſex, the charming, the meritorious ANTONY was not far from ſeventy before he had ſo much taſte as to ſacrifice the meaner paſſion of ambition, nay the world itſelf, to love.

BUT it is in France, that kingdom ſo exquiſitely judicious in the affairs of love, from whence we may copy the arts of happineſs, as well as their other diſcoveries in pleaſure. The monarchs of that nation have more than once taught the world by their example, that a fine woman, though paſt her grand climacteric, may be but juſt touching the meridian of her charms. HENRY the ſecond, and LOUIS the fourteenth will be for ever memorable for the paſſions they ſo long felt for the ducheſs of VALENTINOIS, and madame de MAINTENON. The former in the heat of youth and proſpect of empire,

became

became a ſlave to the reſpectable attractions of DIANA DE POITIERS, many years after his injudicious father had quitted the poſſeſſion of her on the ſilly apprehenſion that ſhe was growing old: and to the laſt moment of his life and reign, HENRY was a conſtant, jealous adorer of her ſtill ripening charms. When the age was over-run with aſtrology, ſuperſtition, bigotry and notions of necromancy, king HENRY ſtill idolized a woman, who had not only married her grandaughter, then a celebrated beauty, but who, if any other prince had reigned, was ancient enough to have come within the deſcription of ſorcery: ſo little do the vulgar diſtinguiſh between the ideas of an old witch and a fine woman. The paſſion of the other monarch was no leſs remarkable. That hero, who had gained ſo many battles by proxy, had preſided in perſon at ſo many tournaments, had raiſed ſuch water-works, and ſhed ſuch ſtreams of heretic blood, and, which was ſtill more glorious, had enjoyed ſo many of the fineſt women in Europe, was at laſt captivated by an old governante, and ſighed away whole years at the feet of his venerable miſtreſs as ſhe worked at her tent with ſpectacles. If LOUIS LE GRAND was not a judge of pleaſure, who can pretend to be? if he was, in favour of what age did he give the golden apple?

I SHALL cloſe my catalogue of ancient miſtreſſes with the renowned NINON L'ENCLOS, a lady whoſe life alone is ſufficient to inculcate my doctrine in it's utmoſt force. I ſhall ſay nothing of her numerous conqueſts for the firſt half of her life: ſhe had wit, youth and beauty, three ingredients which will always attract ſilly admirers. It was not till her fifty-ſixth year that her ſuperior merit diſtinguiſhed itſelf; and from that to her ninetieth ſhe went on improving in the real arts and charms of love. How unfortunate am I, that ſhe did not live a few years longer, that I might have had the opportunity of wearing her chains! It was in her fifty-ſixth year that the

chevalier